

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph 3 on page 12 continuing to page 13 as follows:

From the above-described results, it has been found that the scan range should be divided into plural steering areas and the sparse pattern of the ultrasonic transducers to be used should be set for each of these steering areas. That is to say, the feature of the present invention is that the sparse pattern of the ultrasonic transducers, which transmit and/or receive ultrasonic waves, is set up in accordance with the steering direction ~~or the range of the focusing point~~ (also simply referred to as "steering range" in the present invention) of the ultrasonic beam to be transmitted. Owing to this, it is possible to change the sparse pattern of the ultrasonic transducers in accordance with the steering range so as to reduce the generation of side lobes.